

NORTH COUNTY SUBAREA PLAN UPDATE

The County of San Diego is continuing a major conservation planning effort for North County. It will be a major addition to the County's open space system incorporating many of the ideals contained in the County's successful Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Plan, which currently covers areas in the southern part of San Diego County. The North County MSCP Subarea Plan is located north and east of Elfin Forest and Harmony Grove, north of Camp Pendleton, DeLuz, Fallbrook, Rainbow, Pauma Valley, Lilac, Valley Center, Rancho Guajito and the majority of Ramona.

community of Ramona. Gaining coverage for these species gives the County permitting authority and provides a more effective and streamlined approval process than the more arduous Federal and State procedures.

Another opportunity that exists within the North County MSCP Subarea Plan is the ability to coordinate construction of the much-needed improvements to State Highway 76 with the formation of an expansive regional park in the San Luis Rey River Valley, strengthening the viability of the habitat preserve system.

The County and its consultant, AMEC, and its sub-contractors, Technology Associates International Corporation and the Conservation Biology Institute, are continuing their efforts to collect environmental data and prepare a plan for the North County Subarea. The Independent Science Advisors introduced to you in the July-August Newsletter, have made recommendations designed to enhance and fortify the planning process. Currently, the County is working with the consultants and the advisors to determine the best way to respond to and implement their recommendations.

We would like to have your input on the North County MSCP Subarea Plan. Please see the enclosed insert for the dates, times and places of community workshops to be held in North County. The County encourages public participation and discussion in these workshops and looks forward to working with the residents, property owners, builders, and those with environmental, business and agricultural interests in the coming months as we move forward on this plan.

To review previous issues of the MSCP News, log on to www.sdcdplu.org and click on Multiple Species Conservation Program.



Like the existing MSCP Plan, the North County MSCP Subarea Plan will enable the County to gain coverage for species of plants and animals that are considered rare and endangered or are likely to become endangered. The Subarea Plan will include a number of the same 85 species covered in the existing MSCP Plan but also some additional species -- the most notable being the Stephen's Kangaroo Rat which lives in grasslands and the fairy shrimp that inhabits vernal pools, like those found throughout the



PARTNERS IN PRESERVATION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administers over 70,000 acres of public land in western San Diego County, including approximately 28,000 acres within the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) planning area. Most of these lands lie along the US-Mexico border within close proximity to the San Diego-Tijuana metropolitan area. These public lands include the Otay Mountain Wilderness, National Register cultural sites, and other special designations. Otay Mountain is part of the San Ysidro Mountains, a rugged coastal range, which lies on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. The wilderness protects stands of Tecate Cypress (*Cupressus forbesii*), Mexican flannel bush (*Fremontodendron mexicanum*) and other rare plants found only in this area. The predominant vegetation is coastal sage scrub and chaparral with oak and sycamore stands found in the canyon bottoms and valleys. Otay Mountain remains a wild and relatively undisturbed vestige of California's natural landscape.

The Otay/Kuchamaa Cooperative Management Area was identified as a core area within the MSCP and links public lands at Otay Mountain and Cedar Canyon with public lands at Little Tecate Peak and Tecate Peak. While BLM managed lands form an integral part of the MSCP, BLM has also agreed to pursue strategies including acquisitions, exchanges, Recreation and Public Purpose Act leases, and donations to complete the MSCP preserve system. The Trust for Public Land has been an important partner with BLM and continues to provide support and advocacy in Congress to meet management goals. Since 1994, the BLM has acquired over 4,500 acres for the Otay/Kuchamaa Cooperative Management Area of the MSCP.



Mexican flannelbush/ Photo by Charles Webber, California Academy of Sciences

In 1999, Congress established the Otay Mountain Wilderness. An on-site project manager was authorized, along with a fire management officer. Total staff as of 2001 includes Greg Hill, San Diego Project Manager; Ron Woychak, Fire Management Officer; Joseph Funk, Law Enforcement Ranger; and Clay Howe, Fire Prevention Officer.

These positions are co-located with other agencies in San Diego County. The BLM Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office provides planning, monitoring, GIS, and other support functions. The BLM is currently preparing a Resource Management Plan for the Otay/Kuchamaa Cooperative Management Area. The plan will guide decisions on habitat protection, recreation, transportation, grazing, fire management, traditional cultural properties, and other uses and issues affecting these public lands within the MSCP.



Vegetation on Otay Mountain/ Picture Courtesy of BLM

BLM Protective Designations Within the MSCP:

Otay Mountain Wilderness Area- Addition to the National Wilderness Preservation system of 18,500 acres. Bill (HR15) passed by 106th Congress and signed by President on 12/10/99.

Cedar Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and Research Natural Area (RNA) - Designation of 705 acres to protect Mexican flannel bush; partially within Otay Mountain Wilderness Area.

Kuchamaa ACEC and Outstanding Natural Area (ONA) - Designation of 624 acres on Tecate (Kuchamaa) and Little Tecate Peaks for cultural resources protection and Quino checkerspot butterfly habitat.

For further information, contact:
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MSCP AWARDED THREE NCCP GRANTS

The County of San Diego was awarded three grants, totaling nearly one half million dollars, for the management and monitoring of Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) lands by the State of California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). These grants were awarded through the Natural Communities Conservation Planning (NCCP) Program Local Assistance Grant (LAG) process.

A grant of \$150,000 was awarded for the simultaneous development of both Area-Specific Management Directives and a Fire Management Plan for the San Vicente preserve (formally known as the Boys and Girls Club property). The Departments of Planning and Land Use and Parks and Recreation will coordinate these tasks. This grant will involve baseline surveys of the floral and faunal species onsite resulting in management directives that will include adaptive management. The management plan will also address responses to fire outbreak and measures to lessen the impact of any potential wildfires to sensitive biological resources while protecting neighboring private and public landowners.

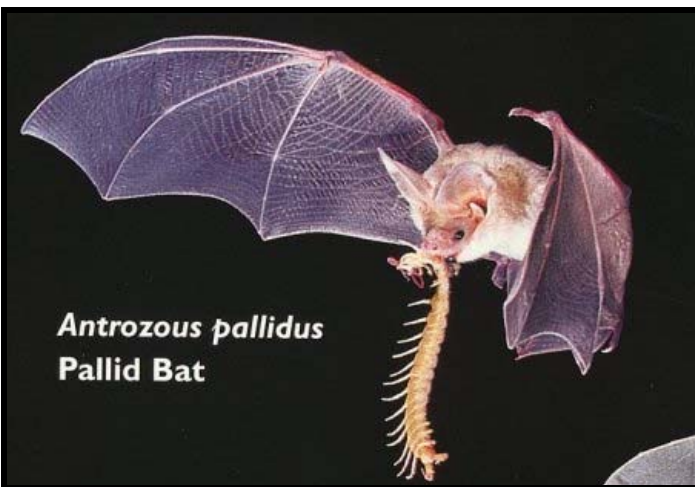


Photo by J. Scott Altenbach

A grant for over \$100,000 was awarded that will gather baseline information on the presence of various bat species throughout preserve lands that contribute to MSCP. San Diego County is supportive of more bat species than any other county in California, with 23 of California's 25 potentially occurring species having been found here, including 15 state and/or federally sensitive species. However, very little information regarding local bat species' true current

distribution and status within the MSCP region is actually known. Four study areas will be examined that are characterized by the presence of major creeks and/or rivers, oak woodland, and significant geological features such as rocky outcrops, cliffs, quarries, caves and mines. These habitat features provide for most of the ecological requirements of many locally occurring species and generally support a high diversity of bats. There are at least five state or federally sensitive bat species that are associated with these habitat types. They are the California Leaf-nosed bat (*Macrotus californicus*), the Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), the Pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), the Western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillei*), and the Western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis*). All bat species occurring in the proposed study areas will be surveyed for, but these five are of particular concern due to apparent local declines.

A grant of over \$180,000 was awarded to examine the potential habitat for the Arroyo southwestern toad and the Southwestern pond turtle to delineate where the extant populations currently occur. There has been a significant loss and or degradation of riparian wetlands in San Diego County. Consequently Arroyo southwestern toad (*Bufo californicus*) and Southwestern pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata pallida*) populations have been greatly reduced and remain highly fragmented. Prior to the development of a management plan for these species it is imperative that the current distribution is determined. It is proposed to perform habitat surveys and population monitoring on various preserve lands within the MSCP boundary. Surveying will be performed from 2002-2004. A final report will be prepared which will include Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to produce population maps, datasets, and area-specific management guidelines for the Arroyo southwestern toad and Southwestern pond turtle. The Biological Resource Division of the United States Geological Survey will perform this work.



Arroyo southwestern toad:
USGS/photo by Chris Brown



STEPHEN'S KANGAROO RAT



Photo by Dr. Lloyd Glenn Ingles, California Academy of Sciences

The Stephen's kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys stephensi*) is 1 of 19 species of kangaroo rats. Though they are more closely related to squirrels rather than rats and mice, they are called kangaroo rats because of their ability to jump using their hind legs. Characteristics common to all kangaroo rats include external cheek pouches, large hind legs, relatively small front legs, long tails, and large heads and eyes as an adaptation for nocturnal activity. The average adult weight is approximately 70 grams and

total adult body-plus-tail length ranges between 23 and 30 centimeters.

The geographic distribution of the Stephen's kangaroo rat includes the San Jacinto Valley and adjacent areas of western Riverside, southwestern San Bernardino, and northwestern San Diego counties. The habitat of the Stephen's kangaroo rat has been greatly reduced as a result of agriculture and urban development. Furthermore, the remaining habitat has been fragmented leaving populations of Stephen's kangaroo rat more susceptible to the effects of off-road vehicle activity, the use of rodenticides, genetic bottlenecks, local extirpation, some types of grazing and predators such as domestic cats associated with adjacent development. The Stephen's kangaroo rat was listed as a state threatened species in 1971 in response to these threats. The species was also listed as a federally endangered species on September 30, 1988 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Known locations of Stephen's kangaroo rat in San Diego County include Ramona, Warner Springs/Lake Henshaw area, Rancho Guejito, in the San Luis Rey River Valley, Fallbrook Naval Annex and Camp Pendleton. Coverage of Stephen's kangaroo rat is being planned for in the MSCP North County Subarea Plan.

THREAD-LEAF BRODIAEA



Photo by Ken Bowles

Thread-leaf brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*), a corm-sprouting plant with beautiful violet-red-purple flowers, is typically found in vernally moist grasslands with clay soils and on the periphery of vernal pools. Un-

fortunately, the loss of these habitats has led to the substantial decline of this species throughout its southern California range.

Currently, Thread-leaf brodiaea can be found on the grounds of Camp Pendleton. The species can also be found in a patchy distribution near Palomar Airport and in Carlsbad, where hundreds of acres once

supported vernally wet grasslands. Because of the formerly widespread nature of its potential habitat, it is presumed that the County population of Thread-leaf brodiaea was probably once much larger than currently exists. The large and botanically important San Marcos population near Pacific Street needs permanent protection and management to deter secondary impacts such as dumping and foot traffic. This site supports three species of brodiaea (including *B. orcutti* and *B. jolonensis*) in very large and significant numbers; and retains extraordinarily high quality of habitat for this species not duplicated elsewhere in San Diego County.



Because of its rarity and decline in numbers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed Thread-leaf brodiaea as federally threatened on October 31, 1998. The species has also been on the list of state endangered species since January 1982. The County hopes to gain coverage for the Thread-leaf brodiaea in its North County Subarea Plan.



MSCP CELEBRATES RECENT ACQUISITIONS FOR HABITAT PRESERVATION



County of San Diego
Supervisor Dianne Jacob

On June 22, 2001, San Diego County Supervisor Dianne Jacob joined members of the Daley family and community representatives to celebrate recent acquisitions made in East County for the Multiple Species Conservation Program. The event celebrated the addition of 3,500 acres, which were once part of Daley Ranch in

Jamul. The preserve will be named for Lawrence and Barbara Daley who agreed to sell their land for the purpose of dedicated open space. Since the inception of the MSCP Plan, more than 7,000 acres have been committed for preservation purposes. Supervisor Jacob presented the Daleys with engraved walking sticks and proclaimed:

"We can take satisfaction in knowing that our children and our children's children will have opportunities long into the future to visit this pristine setting to en-

joy and learn more about precious wildlife. This is our true rural heritage. This is true conservation. I am proud to be a part of the celebration of these major acquisitions, and I look forward to other opportunities to protect our natural resources and improve the quality of life for all our citizens."



DPLU PROJECT RECEIVES CRITICAL ACCLAIM

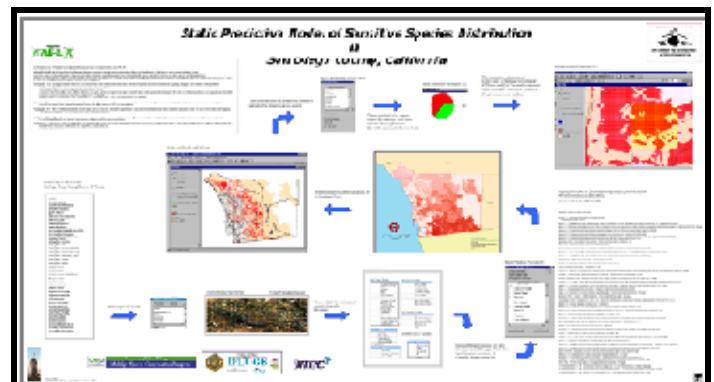
The 21st Annual Earth Systems Research Institute (ESRI) International Users Conference convened in San Diego in July where the San Diego County Department of Planning and Land Use presented a map/model titled "Static Predictive Model of Sensitive Species Distribution in San Diego, CA."

The model accomplished this with the aid of ESRI's ArcView 3.2, which performed spatial overlay and cross-tabulation operations. These GIS functions allowed research staff to evaluate where favorable environmental conditions exist for various sensitive species in San Diego County.



The intent of the design and presentation of the model was to facilitate a better understanding of the potential County distributions of 387 plant and animal sensitive species.

Congratulations to Tom Oberbauer and Ross Paul Martin for a job well done!!



The research project, headed by Tom Oberbauer with presentation design by Ross Paul Martin, was well received by the scientific community and won critical acclaim as the "Most Educational About GIS" in the awards category.



WELCOME CHRISTINE BROCHARD!



Hi, my name is Christine Brochard, and I have just been hired as an Environmental Management Trainee with the County of San Diego. I graduated this June from UCSD with a degree in Conservation Biology and would like to

pursue a career in the field of environmental biology. My interest in the environment and a curiosity about the government side of environmental issues brought me to the County's MSCP division. I look forward to working on the MSCP. My interests outside of work include playing Ultimate Frisbee, other outdoor activities, and reading.

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